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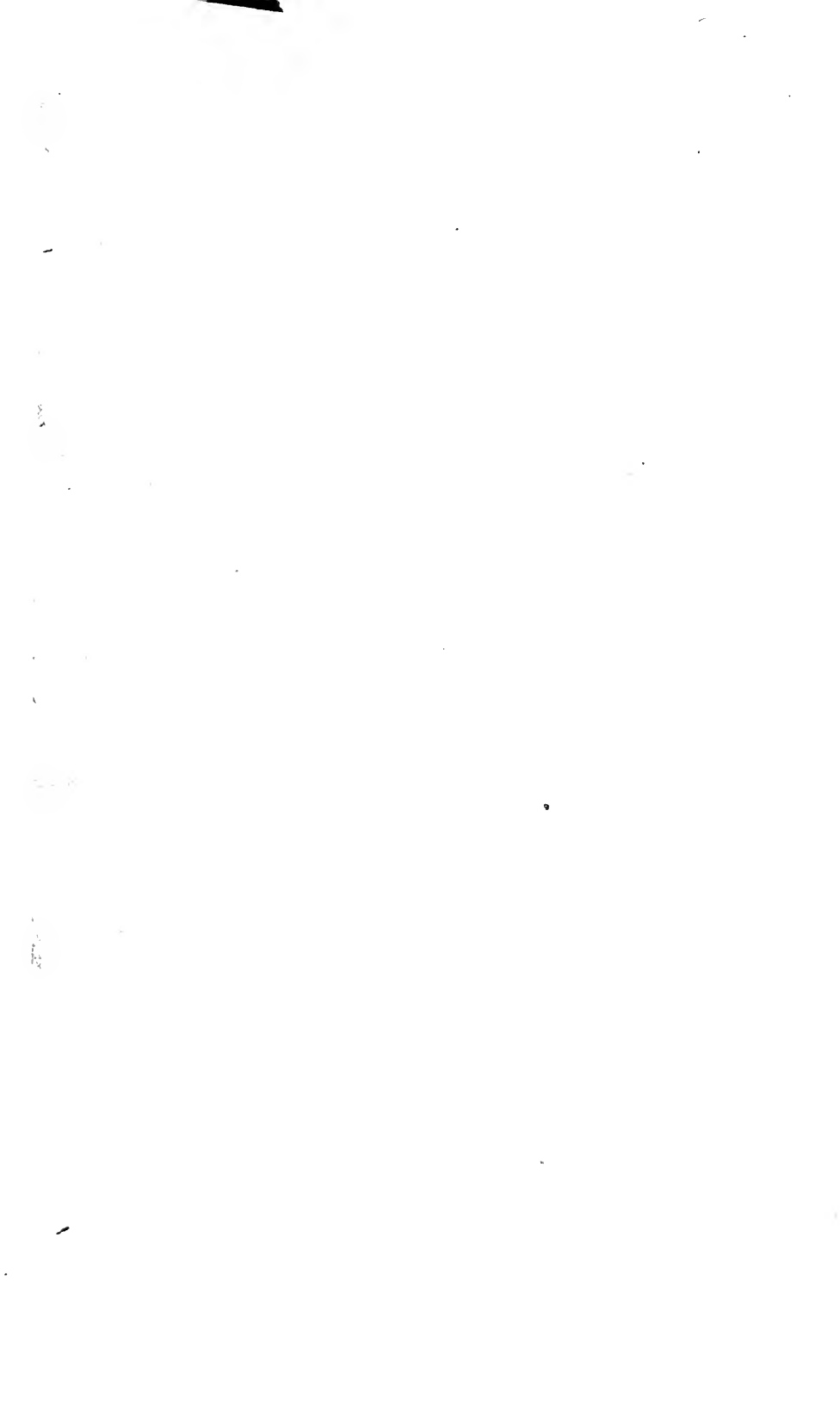
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# A REVIEW,

BY THOS. McDOUGALL,

OF

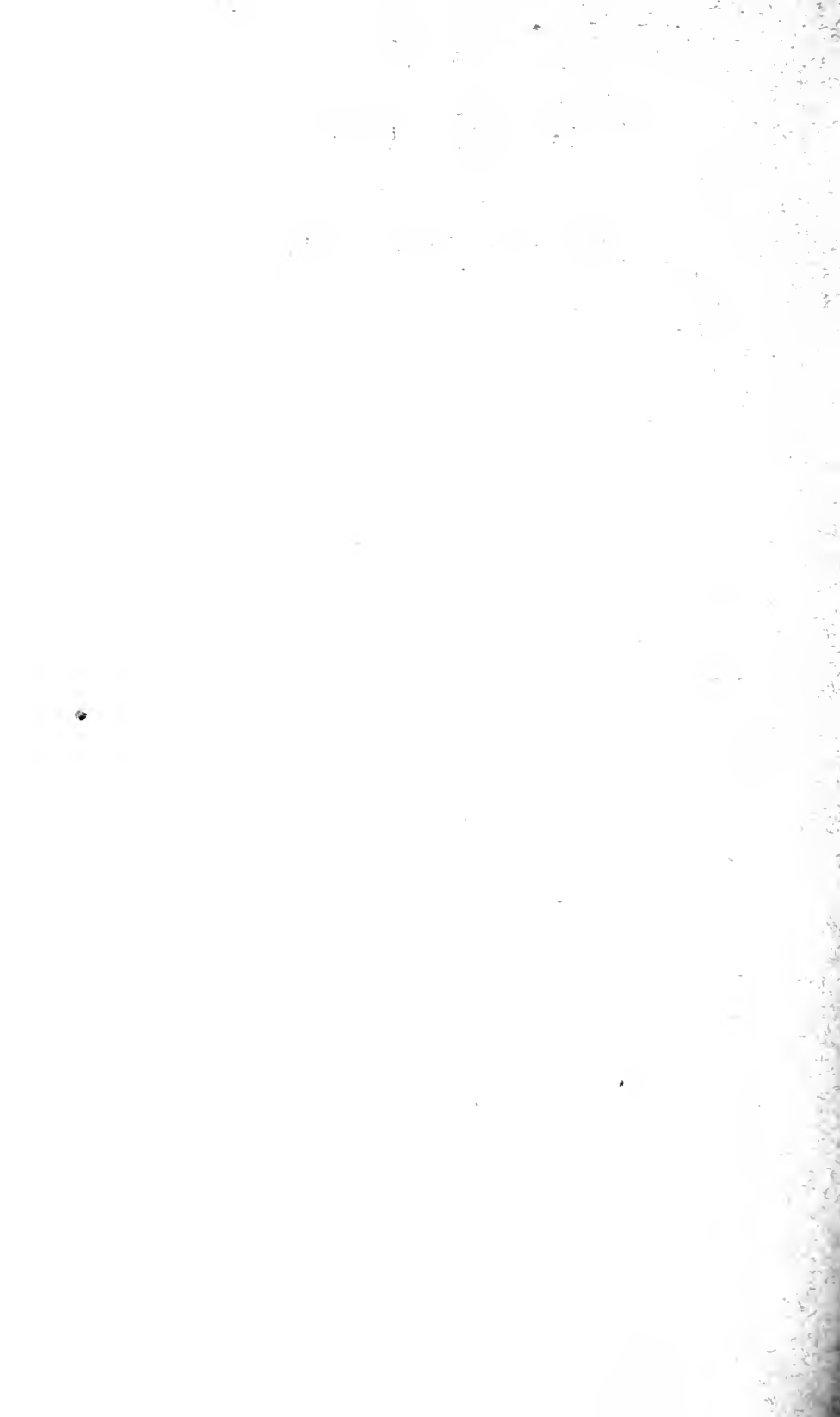
# CERTAIN STATEMENTS

IN A BOOK, ENTITLED:

“THE TRIAL OF DR. BRIGGS BEFORE THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY; A CALM REVIEW OF THE CASE  
BY A STRANGER, WHO ATTENDED  
ALL THE SESSIONS OF THE  
COURT.”



CINCINNATI, O.:  
Elm Street Printing Co., 176 and 178 Elm St.  
1894.



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“R. J. L.”

*Dear Sir:*—You have written and published a book with the above title. The intensely impersonal character, and the eminently fair and impartial attitude claimed, as assumed by you, are evidenced by the following quotations:

“This only need be added: Neither the Rev. Dr. Briggs, nor any other minister or member of the Presbyterian Church in the United States has had any knowledge of the writing of this review. The writer has assumed the sole responsibility for the writing of it, and for every sentiment it contains, and has withheld his name that the views presented may be judged according to their merits, apart from the influence of any name whether obscure or the reverse.” (Preface, last par.)

“Born of Scottish Presbyterian parents, early instructed in the Bible and the Westminster ‘Shorter Catechism’ after the old-time Scottish fashion; specially instructed in the standards of the Presbyterian Church by a thoroughly evangelical and orthodox Scotch minister; subsequently instructed in theology by the late venerable Dr. Charles Hodge and his associates during a three-years’ course at Princeton Theological Seminary; for more than twenty years a city pastor, ministering to people of undoubted intelligence and orthodoxy; for the past quarter of a century a reader of that witness for orthodoxy *The Presbyterian*,—I found myself on the 18th of May last, in the ordering of Providence, and without any pre-arrangement of mine, a visitor at the Washington Assembly. P. 33.

This, and succeeding generations who may become interested in this book of yours, will not have as much difficulty in determining who you are, as has been encountered in ascertaining who was the author of the letters of Junius. If you really desired your views to be judged on their merits and so withheld

your name, why did you give such a modest recital of your experience, career and education?

On page 38, you say :

“Having had an opportunity since the close of the Assembly of reviewing at leisure the official report of the Assembly, with other necessary documents, I have found that the impressions formed during the trial were not only correct, but that they have been much deepened by a careful perusal of all the arguments and evidence presented before the Court.”

In view of this statement that you have examined the official report of the Assembly with other necessary documents, thus intending to create the impression that the statements made in subsequent pages of the book, so far as they refer to matters of evidence and fact, are strictly accurate, and made on full and *calm* reflection, your attention is called to the following, on pp. 124-5 :

“None of all the charges stirred individual commissioners as did these two. The only case, so far as the present writer can remember, in which any member of the court needed to be called to order during the trial, was in connection with these charges. This was in the case of a lay commissioner who took an active part in all the proceedings, and whose opinions and utterances seemed to have weight with many in the court. In expressing his views on these charges, he was deeply stirred, and with earnest gesture and elevated voice began to relate an imaginary colloquy between Dr. Briggs and God, in which he represented ‘God Almighty’ as declaring to Dr. Briggs that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and Dr. Briggs as replying that Moses did not. But at this point he was called to order in the most quiet and considerate way by a venerable father in the Assembly—the Rev. Dr. Storrs.”

Should you write another book, or desire to communicate with the writer, or treat yourself to another luxury by way of a *calm* review, he would be pleased to have you state from what official report, or other source, you obtained the information set forth in the paragraph just quoted. Where do you find that the writer “*needed to be called to order during the trial in connection with these charges.*” Where do you find that the writer made any reference in connection with these charges, or at any time during the trial to *Moses and the*



*Pentateuch?* Be kind enough to furnish us the source of your information in the paragraph above quoted. If the other statements in your book are as far from what actually occurred as is the foregoing, then little or no reliance can be placed on them.

The official report of the three-minute speeches in the trial of the case of Dr. Briggs on its merits, published by the *Washington Post*, makes no reference whatever to what the writer said. If you will examine the *New York Tribune Monthly* for May, 1893, entitled, "The Trial of Dr. Briggs," you will find on page 100 the following :

Thos. McDougall :

"If it be in order in this Presbyterian General Assembly, in this court, permit me to direct your attention to the character of Almighty God and the Lord Jesus Christ for omniscience, veracity and absolute truthfulness. Almighty God said that Isaiah said thus and so ; Dr. Briggs says to Almighty God, 'Isaiah did not say so.' Which will you believe? This is not a matter of science, not a matter of history ; but the Almighty God, the Eternal Jehovah, said in his written Word, in Luke, in John, in Romans, that Isaiah said thus and so ; Dr. Briggs says, 'Almighty God, Isaiah never said it ; he never wrote it ; he was not living when it was written.' This is not a formal or technical question, it is a direct issue as to the veracity of the Eternal God."

The Rev. Dr. H. M. Storrs.—I rise to a point of order, and I wish it taken down. This man has been before us ; is the charge now made against him true? Is it veracious? Has Dr. Briggs said any such thing? That is the question, sir. My point of order is that any man here has a right to the defence of his personal character against unwarranted statements. This is a charge of blasphemy upon Dr. Briggs.

Mr. McDougall.—Let us see. I will answer you, Mr. Storrs. This man has said here that Isaiah did not write half the book that bears his name.

Dr. Storrs.—Mr. Moderator—

Mr. McDougall.—And it is that matter I am going to discuss.

Dr. Storrs.—Mr. Moderator, before a man can say anything of this sort, he must locate the particular language or statement ; otherwise, it is a general statement, and becomes an accusation of blasphemy for which there is no pardon.

Several members undertook to speak.

The Moderator.—Hold on, I will keep the order.

A Member.—I want to know, Mr. Moderator, whether you are presiding officer or not.

The Moderator.—I am trying to be if you will allow me. Now let Mr. McDougall show these quotations that justify his remarks. Proceed, Mr. McDougall.

A Member.—I make this point: Is this quotation in the Inaugural Address?

Mr. McDougall.—It is in the printed document that has been presented here.

Several members attempted to interrupt.

Mr. McDougall.—Brethren, if you will be quiet I will tell you where it is. It is in the charges and specifications—the statement that Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name; and it is in the defence of Dr. Briggs—the statement that Isaiah did not write the latter part of that book. If that is not Dr. Briggs' statement, I will withdraw my charge.

Two things are clear from this report: First, *that the moderator decided that I was in order, and did not decide that I “needed to be called to order;”* Second, that I said nothing on the subject of *Moses and the Pentateuch*, but confined my statements solely to the sixth or what is called the “Isaiah charge.”

As to the quiet and considerate way in which the Rev. Dr. Storrs raised the point of order, as these terms are comparative, and as what is quiet and considerate to one man may be the opposite to another, depending altogether upon whose side the point is made, I suggest that in the interest of truth and correctness of statement, it is better to omit such adjectives altogether.

On page 125, speaking of the fourth and fifth (should be the fifth and sixth) charges, you say:

“It is possible that Dr. Briggs may not be correct in all his conclusions regarding the authorship of parts of the Pentateuch and parts of the Book of Isaiah. He may have made mistakes, such as all students are liable at times to make, or such as any minister may sometimes make in his interpretation of the text from which he preaches; *but that he has fallen into any vital error, or that he has cast any slight upon any part of the inspired Word, either in the course of his study or in the conclusions he has reached, is the reverse of what has been proved by all the records of the case.*” (Italics ours).

The judgment of the General Assembly, quoted in your book on pp. 166–168, finds that the teachings of Dr. Briggs as to the authorship of the Penta-

teuch and parts of the Book of Isaiah, “*were vital errors contrary to the essential doctrine of Holy Scriptures, and the standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which said erroneous teachings strike at the vitals of religion.*” Yet, in the light of that judgment of the Supreme Court of our church, you calmly say “*that Dr. Briggs has not fallen into any vital error, or cast any slight upon any part of the inspired Word,*” and that your conclusion is proved by all of the records in the case.

The judgment of the Supreme Court is a part of the record, and to a legal mind the most important part. You join issue with that solemn judgment, and say that “*the views and teachings of Dr. Briggs touching the authorship of parts of the Pentateuch and parts of the Book of Isaiah do not cast any slight upon any part of the inspired Word are not vital errors, and that this is proved by all the records of the case.*” What your meaning of the records of the case is, I fail to understand, if it does not include the judgment. Permit me to call your attention to what is called the Isaiah charge, and which to the ordinary mind is a conclusive demonstration that the teachings of Dr. Briggs are not in harmony with the Word of God, or with the faith of the Presbyterian Church or of Evangelical Christendom.

#### THE ISAAH CHARGE.

Charge six was as follows :

“The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Chas. A. Briggs, D. D., being a minister of the said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that Isaiah is not the author of half the book that bears his name, which is contrary to direct statements of Holy Scripture and to the essential doctrines of the standards of the said Church, that the Holy Scripture evidences itself to be the Word of God by the consent of all the parts, and that the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.”

The specification was as follows :

“In an inaugural address, which the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., delivered at the Union Theological Seminary, in the city of New York, Jan. 20, 1891, on the occasion of his induction into the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology, which address has been published and extensively circulated

with the knowledge and approval of the said Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., and has been republished by him in a second edition with a preface and an appendix, there occurs the following sentence :

Page 33, lines 14-15 :

“ Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name.”

In his defence before the New York Presbytery, p. 131, Dr. Briggs specifies the half of the Book of Isaiah which he claims was not written by Isaiah, as follows :

“The great prophecy in the last twenty-seven chapters bears no title. It is anonymous. There is nothing about it, therefore, to indicate that its editor or original author designed that it should be regarded as by Isaiah.”

And on page 147 :

“The two passages from the earlier collection are not in question, because I do not deny that Isaiah wrote them ; but only those from Chapters 40-66. If these New Testament writers testify that Isaiah wrote these passages, then the testimony of the New Testament is against the opinion that I have expressed, that Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name ; but these writers testify no such thing.”

And on page 150 :

“Thus of the sixty-six chapters, we may attribute to Isaiah not more than twenty-seven chapters. Thirty-nine chapters, making the larger half of the book, were not written by him, as all the critics acknowledge. My thesis is therefore proven, that Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name.”

To sustain these charges the prosecution cited certain passages from the New Testament, which are as follows :

Matt. 4 : 14, 15.—14, That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthaliin, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

Matt. 12 : 17, 18.—17, That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18, Behold my servant whom I have chosen ; my

beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased : I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

Luke 3 ; 4 —As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Acts 28 ; 25, 26.—25, And when they agreed not among themselves they departed after that Paul had spoken one word. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive,

John 12 ; 38, 41.—38, That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ? 41, These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Rom. 10 ; 16. 20.—16, But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report ? 20, But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me

#### WHAT THE CHARGE IS.

These citations from the New Testament are positive, explicit declarations that the words quoted were spoken and written by Isaiah, and by no one else. Dr. Briggs contended that these words did not mean any more than “ the Book of Isaiah says,” “ spoken through the Book of Isaiah,” “ the word of the Book of Isaiah ” By what rule of construction intelligible to a sound mind, the statement that “ Isaiah said ” is synonymous with “ The Book of Isaiah said ” when the person so claiming, denies that Isaiah, in fact, said or was the author of what bears his name, it is impossible to ascertain. Here in the Bible, which Dr. Briggs declared to be the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are to be found explicit, unambiguous, unequivocal statements that Isaiah said certain words, and yet Dr. Briggs says, Isaiah never did say these words, he never spoke them. He was not in existence when these words were written, and was not in fact their author.

This raises a direct issue of fact between the authors of these statements and Dr. Briggs. If the statements were inspired by God and are a part of the Word of God, then the issue of veracity is between God and Dr. Briggs. It is not contended by Dr. Briggs and his school that the translation of these

verses is imperfect and errant. It is not contended that they are not a part of the original Bible. It is only confidently asserted that these statements, as they appear in the Word of God, are not true, and that Isaiah never wrote the words which are thus attributed to him.

THE APOSTLE PAUL vs. DR. BRIGGS.

If the statements made in Matthew, Luke, John, Acts and Romans are the statements of *uninspired* men, and not a part of the Word of God, then the question arises whether these writers had less means of knowledge at their command than Dr. Briggs. Whether, for instance, the Apostle Paul, the writer of Romans, was less able to determine the authorship of Isaiah than Dr. Briggs. Paul lived nearly two thousand years ago. He therefore lived that much nearer the time of the existence of the author of the Book of Isaiah. He was a Jew, learned in all the knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. He was certainly the peer in intellect and scholarship of any mind of modern times.

As Locke, in his essay on the "Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles," speaking of the Apostle Paul, well says :

"He was, as it is visible, a man of quick thought and warm temper, mighty, well versed in the writings of the Old Testament and full of the doctrine of the New."

Again he says

"This was enough to persuade me that he was not a man of loose and shattered parts, incapable to argue, and unfit to convince those he had to deal with. God knows how to choose fit instruments for the business he employs them in. A large stock of Jewish learning he had taken in at the feet of Gamaliel; and for his information in Christian knowledge, and the mysteries and depths of the dispensation of grace by Jesus Christ, God himself had condescended to be his instructor and teacher. . . . ."

"This being only the safe guide (under the Spirit of God that dictated these sacred writings, etc. . . . ."

"For, granting that he was full stored with the knowledge of the things he treated of, for he had light from heaven, it was God himself furnished him, and he could not want; allowing also that he had ability to make use of the knowledge given for the end for which it was given him, etc. . . . ."

"He fully possessed the entire revelation he had received from God, had

thoroughly digested it, all the parts were formed together in his mind, into one well contracted, harmonious body, etc.”

The Apostle's statements therefore in Romans 10; 16 20, “For Esaias saith,” and “Esaias is very bold and saith,” are more authoritative than those of Dr. Briggs, even on the ground of uninspired scholarship, for with at least equal intellectual equipment and scholarship he lived two thousand years nearer the time when the Book of Isaiah was written. It is to be noted that Dr. Briggs does not dispute the authorship of the latter half of the Book of Isaiah on the basis of any testimony which he can show was not in the possession of or available to the Apostle Paul. The arguments of Dr. Briggs from style, biblical theology, historical situation, and the New Testament, were all equally available to the apostle. Therefore, it would seem to any ordinary mind, that as between the Apostle Paul, *uninspired*, and Dr. Briggs, the opinion of the former should be taken in preference to that of the latter, especially as Dr. Briggs himself, in 1876, when he translated the commentary on the Book of Ezra, entertained the same opinion, and has only lately changed his mind.

#### CLAIMS OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP.

It is difficult to see how so-called modern scholarship can lay any just claim to new or additional evidence as to the authorship of the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, or superior intellectual ability in applying the rules of evidence on the question of authorship, to that of former generations. The Apostle Paul, and the scholars of his generation, so far as the authorship of the latter half of the Book of Isaiah is concerned, were as competent to determine that authorship on the evidence then existing, as any of our modern scholars. The progress of the ages has added no new evidence to the fact of authorship, and certainly has not added anything to the intellectual gifts of the race. Certain claims of so-called modern scholarship and progress might be called, to some extent, modern fads. Some of its claims are so saturated with egotism, and so blinded with unconscious self-righteousness as to disqualify the claimants and victims from using aright the information they possess, and from making that careful and judicial analysis of facts essential to correct conclusions worthy of true scholarship. Surely in the matter of the scholarship affecting the Jewish scriptures and the authorship thereof, the Apostle Paul, *uninspired*, was the

superior of Dr. Briggs, and as between him and Dr. Briggs, on the question of who wrote certain words in the Old Testament, we would naturally believe Paul, even when uninspired, in preference to Dr. Briggs.

Did the apostle believe Isaiah wrote and spake the words as stated by him in Romans 10 ; 16-20? Did he know he did not speak them when he said he did? If the apostle knew that Isaiah was not the author of and never spake the words, when he said he did, he deliberately told what was untrue. Dr. Briggs says, " Defence," p. 147 :

" If these New Testament writers testify that Isaiah wrote these passages, then the testimony of the New Testament is against the opinion I have expressed that Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name, etc."

Does not this make a square issue? If Dr. Briggs is right that Isaiah did not write or speak these passages, and he affirms Isaiah did not, and if the New Testament writers affirm he did, then the latter told what was not true, either ignorantly or wilfully.

#### GOD'S TRUTHFULNESS INVOLVED.

On the other hand, believing as we do and as the great majority of Christendom does, that the passages cited from Matthew, Luke, John, Acts and Romans were inspired, then the question is one involving the truthfulness of the author of the inspired word.

You will certainly admit that God knew who wrote the passages in question. God being omniscient, knowing the end from the beginning, and knowing who wrote the disputed passages, the issue is between God and Dr. Briggs.

It is to be borne in mind, as we have already said, that these statements thus inspired by God are parts of the book which Dr. Briggs, by his ordination vow, in order to obtain admission into the Presbyterian ministry, declared to be the Word of God. There was no reservation of these passages as being uninspired, and not a part of the Word of God made by Dr. Briggs when he took the ordination vow. By the terms of that vow, he is precluded and estopped from saying that these passages are not a part of the Word of God, and that their authors in writing them were not inspired.

If it be true that Isaiah never said these words, and that the Holy Ghost never spake these words by Isaiah the prophet, then God must be the author



of untruth, and that not in a matter of opinion, or speculation, but in a direct, positive, unequivocal statement of fact. Will any man dare to assert that the knowledge of Dr. Briggs as to who wrote these words, Isaiah or a "Great Unknown," is superior to the knowledge of the omniscient God?

"The Book of Isaiah said" could not mean "Isaiah said" if the portion of the book bearing his name was not in fact written by him, and he was not believed to be its author. If in fact the whole of the book bearing the name of Isaiah was written by Isaiah, it might well be said that the words "Book of Isaiah says" and "Isaiah says" are equivalent. But to claim that "Isaiah said" and "The Book of Isaiah said" mean the same thing, when the person using the first phrase does not believe that the passages cited, or the portions of the book containing the passages cited, were really written by Isaiah, is a contradiction on a question of fact, and involves the veracity or lack of conscience or sense of the person making the statement.

#### EXPLANATIONS AND THEORIES.

The attempted explanations and theories of Dr. Briggs reveal a curious state of mind. Here is one claiming to be a scholar whose function it is to state facts correctly, and make his statements clear, plain and easily understood, asserting that "The Book of Isaiah says" is equivalent to the statement "Isaiah says," while denying that the passages and the portions of the book in which the passages in question are found, were really written by Isaiah. And further, that the God-given, God-inspired declarations of Matthew, Luke, John and Paul: "*Spoken by Esaias the prophet,*" "*The words of Esaias the prophet,*" "*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying,*" "*The saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake,*" "*These things said Esaias,*" "*For Esaias saith,*" "*But Esaias is very bold, and saith,*" mean nothing more than that Esaias never said any such things; the Holy Ghost never did speak the words cited unto the fathers by Esaias, but only that these statements are to be found in a book bearing by tradition Isaiah's name, the latter part of which, including these passages, Isaiah did not write, and was not living when the words thus attributed to him were spoken.

Is it within the power of a sane mind to imagine a course of reasoning,

and invent a line of argument and teaching more completely destructive of the distinctions between truth and falsehood, and which more violently shock the sense of common honesty than this, thereby rendering faith in the Bible and its author impossible?

Did God know when he inspired the writers to make the statements that Isaiah did say, did speak these words, that Isaiah did not speak any such words? Then God is the author of untruth. Were these statements by the sacred writes uninspired? Then the statements made by them were either made in ignorance, or were wilfully false. Where do we find that these statements were the uninspired declarations of Matthew, Luke, John and Paul? On what evidence is Dr. Briggs able to convict these writers of ignorance or falsehood? If he has succeeded in convicting them of either ignorance or falsehood, of what value are their other writings? What faith can be placed in the New Testament Scriptures penned by them?

We stand amazed at the awful presumption involved in the cool assertion that Isaiah never spake the words thus attributed to him in Matthew, Luke, John, Acts and The Romans. We are appalled at the audacity of men who thus challenge the omniscience and veracity of the Eternal God.

As for you, posing with your "Calm Review," let me suggest that you make another review, and reverse your conclusions when you say :

"It is possible that Dr. Briggs may not be correct in all his conclusions regarding the authorship of parts of the Pentateuch and parts of the Book of Isaiah. He may have made mistakes, such as all students are liable at times to make, or such as any minister may sometimes make in his interpretation of the text from which he preaches; *but that he has fallen into any vital error*, or that he has cast any slight upon any part of the inspired word, either in the course of his study, or in the conclusions he has reached, is the reverse of what has been proved by all the records of the case."

The condition of mind involved in a direct challenge of the veracity of God by one who has subscribed to the ordination vow of the Presbyterian ministry, is difficult to understand. God is absolute truth. Nothing that is his can, in the nature of things, be a mis-statement of fact. No consideration of any kind would justify God, the Eternal Word, the Eternal Truth, in stating certain portions of the Book of Isaiah to have been written by Isaiah, when in

fact they were not so written; or even countenancing, without correction or protest, in his word, statements that are untrue, with reference to these portions.

What kind of a conception of God has a mind that assumes that Christ would do this for any reason, and yet claim that he can remain in the Church as a minister loyal to his ordination vow, while declaring that Christ is God manifest in the flesh, sinless and inerrant.

#### A CONCEPTION OF GOD.

Apart altogether from the ordination vow of Dr. Briggs, and his explicit declaration that the Bible is the Word of God, and that these passages form a part of that Word, would any man of sound mind say that what you call the mistakes of Dr. Briggs in his conclusions touching the authorship of parts of the Book of Isaiah, are not vital errors, and do not cast any slight upon any part of the inspired Word? It would be interesting to have your conception of God, and what would constitute a slight upon his Word. The conception of God as revealed to us in his Word, and declared in the standards of the Presbyterian Church, is absolutely inconsistent with the idea of errancy, mistake or falsity of statement, or a lack of knowledge essential to a correct statement of fact.

Omniscient, knowing all things, infinite in truth, incapable of error, falsity or mistake, how can it be said that such a God inspired a creature to write for him, as a part of his Word, the statement that Isaiah said thus and so, when in fact, Isaiah never did say or write such words. Some of us might be pardoned for saying that the conception of God involved in the teachings of Dr. Briggs touching the inspired Word of God, are such as to render God unworthy of the worship and confidence of the race. Why should any human soul be asked to risk its eternal destiny on the word of a God who either did not know what he was saying when he inspired the statements that Isaiah said thus and so, or else deliberately mis-stated the facts.

#### THE ISSUE DIRECT AND CLEARLY DEFINED.

There is no room in this Isaiah charge for speculation or different constructions of language. The passages cited in the specifications contain

affirmative, unequivocal declarations that a certain man wrote or spoke certain words, as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. As we have said, no question is raised as to the correctness of the translation of these words; it is not claimed that they were not a part of the original manuscript. The Word of God nowhere indicates that these statements are other than a part of it, and a necessary part of it. The ordination vow of Dr. Briggs covered the passages cited to sustain the charge, and yet we are told by one who assumes an air of great impartiality, superior intelligence, and calmness of review, that while Dr. Briggs may not be correct in all his conclusions regarding the authorship of parts of the Book of Isaiah, none of his mistakes constitute vital error, or cast any slight upon any part of the inspired Word.

Can this mind, so evenly balanced, so colorless in its conceptions as to be able to write what it calls a *calm* review, tell us what *is* vital error, if teaching that denies God's omniscience and veracity is not such? Or how a slight can be cast upon the Word of God, if not by denying the truth of certain explicit statements contained therein?

It may be freely conceded that in the absence of any declarations in the Bible as to who wrote certain parts of the Book of Isaiah, the question of their authorship would be wholly unimportant, it being admitted that they are a part of the Word of God, but that Word speaks directly and positively on the authorship, and it is these statements that Dr. Briggs challenges. It is to be noted that Dr. Briggs in his defence admits the prophecy to be a part of the Word of God, while he denies the Isaiah authorship. If, therefore, the prophecy is a part of the Word of God, inspired by him, and if another part of the same Word, inspired by the same God, declares that these prophecies were written by Isaiah, and Dr. Briggs demonstrates that this is untrue, he destroys the Word of God, and renders it unworthy of belief.

In our opinion, as a member of the court which decided the cases, and as one who read Dr. Briggs' defence before the New York Presbytery, before rendering the decision, it does not seem possible to believe in the omniscience and veracity of God, and believe that the passages cited in the specifications are a part of the Word of God, and at the same time maintain that Isaiah never wrote or spake the words which are therein declared to have been written or spoken by him.

As the writer said on the floor of the General Assembly, when these charges were under consideration on their merits, "The question is, which will

we believe, God or Dr. Briggs? And now we ask, who knows best as to the authorship of the Book of Isaiah. If it be conceded that the omniscient God knows best, this question is settled in favor of the authorship of Isaiah, for it is so declared by him in his inspired Word. Either the Bible is God's Word or it is not. Who the penmen were may be of little moment. They were but the instruments for conveying to the race the message of the Eternal God. To cast doubt on his omniscience, to question his veracity, is to destroy faith in that book on which rests the eternal destiny of the race, and this doubt is cast by those who say that the statements of God in his Word that Isaiah is the author of the passages cited in Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, and Romans, as aforesaid, are untrue.

## THE FINAL JUDGMENT; AND THE ACTION OF THE ASSEMBLY IN THE CASE.

The following are quotations from your book :

“ Had the Assembly of 1893 observed distinctions of terms, and made ‘ a careful analysis of the real meaning of Dr. Briggs under each charge ’ as the Assembly of 1836 did in the case of Mr. Barnes, the verdict of acquittal by the New York Presbytery would have been sustained by the Washington Assembly.” (P. 187.)

“ The sooner the world is assured that Dr. Briggs does not either hold or teach a single one of the heretical doctrines for the alleged holding of which he has been condemned and suspended from the gospel ministry, the better for the Church and for the world at large.” (P. 188.)

“ My deep conviction is that Dr. Briggs has not been justly convicted of heresy, but that, on the contrary, he has been condemned and suspended from the ministry for deducing sound doctrines from the Word of God,—doctrines which are contrary to nothing contained in the Westminster standards.” (P. 195.)

“ Is there no relief from such a position ? There is. It will be competent for another General Assembly, after due investigation, to say that the circumstances surrounding the trial of Dr. Briggs were such as prevented the Assembly at Washington from being in proper possession of all the facts and arguments presented, and that, as the result, Dr. Briggs was condemned for holding heretical views, which he solemnly disavows, and for holding extra-confessional views, which were only supposed to be heretical ; and that on a more minute and extended examination of the evidence and arguments in the case than it was possible for the Assembly at Washington to make, it has been found that the accused did not either hold or teach heretical views, and that therefore he be relieved of the sentence passed upon him.” (P. 190-191.)

Why did you write this book? What was to be gained by publishing it other than a brief notoriety? Did you write it in the interest of the peace and purity of the Church? Was it your purpose to secure that obedience to authority that is essential to the maintenance of any Church? Were you seeking by this production to increase in our beloved Church throughout all its borders, that respect for the decisions of its supreme tribunal to which they are entitled, and which every minister and elder is under vow to accord to them? Can you name anywhere a more uncalled for attack than you have thus made against lawful authority, or a more insidious attempt to undermine the courts of our Church and to disturb its peace?

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is the Supreme Court of one of the greatest denominations in Christendom. It was the Court that tried Dr. Briggs, and was composed of over five hundred members selected from among its ablest and best men, a Court of which you yourself have said "many of its members were men of learning, and all of them were earnest and conscientious men." That Court, after days of patient hearing, after according Dr. Briggs all the time he asked for the presentation of his case, after the fullest consideration, and after an agitation extending over years, found him guilty and condemned his teaching by a vote of 383 to 116.

You, a stranger, if not an intermeddler, not a member of the Court, without the obligations of a judge resting upon you, in this book that you call a "calm review" deliberately declare the Assembly's decision wrong and unjust, and say as to the judgment and sentence pronounced by that Court:

"My deep conviction is that Dr. Briggs has not been justly convicted of heresy, but that, on the contrary, he has been condemned and suspended from the ministry for deducing sound doctrines from the Word of God—doctrines which are contrary to nothing contained in the Westminster standards."

And further, on page 189, you say:

"Nor has the wrong done been simply a wrong to Dr. Briggs. He may be able to endure to be misunderstood. His consciousness of having to endure this may itself be a source of comfort to him. He may look unto One infinitely greater than all earth's divines, who was charged with being a blasphemer and condemned by the leaders of the orthodox Church of his day, and may feel that in having to bear a like cross after him he is infinitely honored."

What is to be said of the position taken by you, that Dr. Briggs in his trial and sentence is to be consoled by the trial and sentence of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if the cases were in any sense parallel? In what respect are they parallel? Who made you competent to determine that the 383 members of the Assembly who adjudged Dr. Briggs guilty, and sentenced him, rendered a wrong decision? Who made you a court of last resort and that of infallible judgment, thus to reverse the General Assembly?

ERROR IN JUDGMENT NOT PRESUMED.

It is true, as you state in your book, "that General Assemblies sometimes err." and it is true that even the Supreme Court of the United States has been known to reverse its own decisions. But it is equally true that the Supreme Court of the United States and the General Assembly have rendered a thousand times more decisions in which they have never reversed themselves, and in an overwhelming majority of cases have rendered just and righteous judgments. There is no presumption that courts err, the presumption always is that their decisions are just. Who constituted you a tribunal to review the judgment of the General Assembly, the Supreme Court of the Church? What qualifications have you for that position? Did it ever dawn upon you while making this "calm review," that *you* could err, and that in promulgating these opinions, in publishing them, and in attacking the prosecuting committee and others you may have been guilty of an error, committed a stupendous blunder, done irreparable evil and injury, and that you may have inflicted a grievous wrong on the Church of Jesus Christ?

Frankly, is it possible for *you* to err?

Is not this book, this *calm* review, as uncalled for, as unwarranted an assault on the peace, purity and faith of our beloved Church as could be made?

It is true that all men are free to express their opinions touching any decision by any Supreme Court, but it is also true that those who are members of the Presbyterian Church, and especially those who are bound by its ordination vows, should, when her courts have spoken, loyally submit, although the decisions may not meet with their approval. Decision and authority must rest somewhere; there must be a court of last resort, and the Presbyterian Church has constituted her General Assembly her supreme judicatory in the



interpretation of her doctrines and constitution, and all loyal Presbyterians accept her decisions as final.

Notwithstanding this, we find an unwise and needless agitation going on in our Church, promoted and maintained by such publications as yours, and by circulars and otherwise, and which finds expression in such resolutions as the following :

“ Resolved, That we view with apprehension the attempt of the General Assembly to make new definitions by dogma and deliverance and by judicial decisions, and express our conviction that no doctrinal statement which is not explicitly contained in the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of the Church, is binding on her office-bearers.” Who determines finally what the confession and catechisms mean, if it is not the General Assembly ?

#### A PARALLEL CASE.

The Supreme Court of the United States is the judicial and final interpreter of the Constitution of the United States, and its judgments are final and binding on all who live under that Constitution. What would you think of a body of lawyers who, having submitted their causes to that court for decision and having been defeated after patient and full trial, would meet in a caucus or convention and solemnly resolve “ that they view with apprehension the attempt of the Supreme Court of the United States to make new definitions of law, by deliverance and by judicial decision, and expressing their conviction that no law is binding which is not explicitly contained in the statutes of the United States enacted pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution ?

Would you not treat such conduct as childish ? Is it childish on the part of lawyers and manly on the part of ministers ?

Had the General Assembly decided, by a vote of 383 to 116, to sustain the appeal of Dr. Briggs, it would have been interesting to have read your “ *calm* review ” and the opinions of those of your school who are seeking a reversal. Instead of the resolution being that you and your school view with apprehension the attempt of the General Assembly to make new definitions by dogma and deliverance, we would have had a resolution that you view with gratitude the conduct of the General Assembly in the case of Dr. Briggs, by deliverance and by judicial decision confining itself strictly to the Constitution, as you interpret it.

Is it not idle to be assailing the decisions of the Supreme Court, the General Assembly, because they do not run our way and do not suit our pre-conceived opinions? The case of Dr. Briggs was not decided on any technical grounds or misunderstanding of his views, as you charge. Dr. Briggs assailed certain parts of the Word of God and declared them to be untrue. He assailed the faith of our Church in the Word of God. The issue was not one of misconstruction or misunderstanding of his teachings. His statements were clear and well defined, as I have shown in the matter of the Isaiah charge. He and his school challenge the omniscience and veracity of God and the truthfulness of the Bible. They claim it is errant, and false in its historical statements. Their assaults upon that book are utterly destructive, to the ordinary mind, of any faith in its statements.

Do you believe that Isaiah said the words that in Matthew, Luke, John, Acts and Romans are attributed to him? If you do, you cannot agree with Dr. Briggs. If you do not, then you challenge the knowledge and veracity of the writers, and if you believe these statements are a part of the Eternal Word, you challenge the omniscience and veracity of the Eternal God.

#### OUR CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

The position of the Presbyterian Church on this point is unmistakable. She declares that God gave a revelation of His will to the race, the Word of God, the Bible. She declares that the revelation thus given was a fixed quantity, a unit, a book, and is the product of the Eternal God. When given by him to the race, it was absolutely inerrant. The copies which we now possess and use, *if* they do contain mistakes or discrepancies, contain only such mistakes and discrepancies as must have arisen from translation or copying which are not, and cannot be, a part of the Word of God. Just as the mistakes and discrepancies which may exist in the copy of the statutes of any State are not a part of the statute themselves, nor are the legislators the authors thereof. It is not these mistakes and discrepancies Dr. Briggs and his school assail, it is the statements historical and otherwise of the original, or what is conceded must have been a part of the original.

Those of us who lay no claim to scholarship, are amazed at the audacity and lack of originality in the present attacks upon the Word of God by reason

of alleged errors. Nearly all of these alleged errors have been shown to be the stock in trade of Paine and Voltaire, and Dr. Briggs and his school are simply peddling the stale rationalistic chestnuts of Paine and Voltaire. They do not say that any seeming mistakes are the work of human hands, and are therefore not a part of God's Word. They say that the claim that they did not exist in the original Word that came from God cannot be maintained.

Let them say that if any errors or discrepancies exist in the present copies of the Bible they are not a part of the Word, as that Word was given by God, and that if there are any mistakes or discrepancies they are, and must be, the work of human hands, and they will then be in harmony with the faith of the Church. Bear in mind that we do not concede that it has been satisfactorily proven that there are errors, mistakes or discrepancies in the Bible, as we now have it, for none of the so-called mistakes have been demonstrated to be such. Essential to the faith of the race in the Word of God is the belief that the revelation which the Eternal God gave to the race is as inerrant and free from mistake as its divine author, and that when our copies are freed from all of errant man's alleged mistakes and discrepancies in copying, translating and transmitting, if there be such, we have now the inerrant Word of our inerrant God.

#### YOUR CONDUCT.

In what you claim as zeal for the truth, and your desire to promote the peace and purity of the Church and in your *calm* and impartial review, let me ask you why you spake of the General Assembly and the Prosecuting Committee as follows :

“Judging as a disinterested observer, the majority of the Assembly never properly apprehended Dr. Briggs' position. They never succeeded in looking at the matters in dispute from his point of view.” P. 31.

“Those who spoke as representing the views of the minority, appeared to see the case from the same point of view with myself, and to reason correctly, while the representatives of the majority seemed to view it from a wholly different standpoint, and to reason accordingly.” P. 38.

“The prosecuting committee utterly failed to meet Dr. Briggs here. They said several things as if in reply, but their statements are so indefinite and conflicting, etc.” P. 49.

“The unsoundness of the position taken by the prosecution is made still more apparent by the violence they do to Scripture in their attempt to maintain their position.” P. 64.

“If this be not sufficient to prove the correctness of the position the prosecution once and again almost tauntingly attributed to Dr. Briggs, turn to the thirteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings, and read at the eighteenth verse.” P. 91.

“We may be thankful that the above statement by the prosecution is a mis-statement.” P. 99.

“The prosecution contend that if the Bible contains within its pages any of the false words of men “it lacks the one essential of infallibility, absolute truthfulness of all its contents.” One cannot but be amazed that intelligent men should reason in such a way.” P. 101.

“But it is unnecessary to go on exposing the fallacies of the argument of the prosecution by which they support equally fallacious charges.” P. 102.

“The prosecution seem to have a sacred dread of the thought of using their reason in matters of religion. In all soberness, I believe that this accounts for the singularly unreasonable positions they have taken up in connection with this whole case.” P. 105.

It must occur to the ordinary mind that there is an assumption of superior knowledge and ability, and unconscious self-righteousness on your part, in making these attacks on the Assembly and the prosecuting committee. If you were so anxious to serve the cause of truth and the peace of the Church, why did you indulge in such uncalled-for, unjust and unwarranted reflections on those who had no other interest in the case than fidelity to truth and their ordination vows as they understood them?

#### HYPER CONSERVATIVES. BROAD LIBERALS.

In an age when those who voted against Dr. Briggs are sneeringly called *hyper conservatives*, and those who voted for him are proudly called *broad liberals*, permit me to say that calling such names and indulging in such talk is the chatter of children. Those who are called hyper conservatives have as much right to the term “broad liberals” as those who arrogate to themselves the

exclusive possession of that title. We yield to no man in our desire for true freedom. No class of men have made greater sacrifices for freedom, and for the Church and her faith than the men now sneeringly called hyper-conservatives. It is not a question of names or of sentiment; it is a question of what is right and what is wrong; what is fundamental to the faith of our Church, and what is essential to faith in God's truth,

#### OUR CHURCH STANDS FOR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

The Presbyterian Church has always stood for faith, for loyalty to her standards, for obedience to authority, and for that true freedom whose highest expression is implicit obedience to law. The trial and sentence of Dr. Briggs were in entire harmony with the historic faith and conduct of our great denomination. Her people felt that her faith was vitally assailed by one who bore her name and had obtained entrance into her ministry under a solemn vow made in the sight of God to maintain that faith.

Without respect of persons, unawed by wealth or social position or the fictitious notoriety of scholarship, the General Assembly tried the case of Dr. Briggs in the fear of God, and rendered a just and righteous judgment. She deprived him of no right, but with a patience born of God, she accorded to him every right, and granted him a fuller hearing than would have been granted in any civil court in the land. Without heat or passion, and impelled solely by her sense of duty, our Church has reached a decision, which, in our opinion, *will never be disturbed, and which is vital to her existence and the preservation of her faith in God and His Word.*

#### THE AFTERMATH.

Have you read the articles of Dr. Briggs that have appeared in the *North American Review* and in the *Forum* since the trial of his case, and his utterances at the so called Parliament of Religions? If so, do you not find in these utterances the logical result of the teachings that were condemned by the General Assembly at Washington, and are you not now sorry you have published your book? One of the papers of our Church that cannot be accused of hyper-conservatism, has declared "these utterances to be those of an un-

balanced mind." Is our beloved Church to continue to suffer and be kept on the waters of agitation and turmoil for such a man and such a cause?

Why should there be such persistent efforts made, by the misuse of platitudes, and in the name of liberty and constitutional rights, for a reversal of the decision of the General Assembly in the Briggs case, by those whose entire time and service should be consecrated to the maintenance of the faith of the Church, and the promotion of its peace and purity by obedience to the decisions of its lawfully constituted courts? What would be gained by a reversal of the judgment in the Briggs case? Would agitation cease on the happening of such an event? Would not those whose judgment had thus been set aside have the same right to agitate for a reversal of the reversal as the small minority which is now so persistently seeking to set aside a decision, which is the deliberate conviction, after a full hearing, and years of consideration, of the great majority of the Church? Is there no court of last resort; are there no final decisions in judicial cases in our beloved Church?

Why should the time and talents of some of our ministers and professors be so largely devoted to this needless, fruitless agitation, and to examining the Word of God with a powerful rationalistic microscope, apparently eager to find, in the name of modern scholarship, specks cast by human hands upon the pure diamond of the Word of God? Having discovered such specks on the *surface* of the diamond, why should they be so jubilant in declaring that these specks are a part of the diamond itself, a part of the Word of God, and therefore the work of God?

That Word of God has been attacked in like manner in the name of scholarship in all ages since God gave it as His written word to the race for the salvation of their souls.

Let me close with the words of the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, of London, written January, 1894, from the Hotel des Anglais, Mentone :

“The Word of God is being assailed from every quarter, and the holy writings that Jesus loved and believed are being degraded to a mere human literature. We want no one to help us under any false impression, and therefore think it only honest to avow that TO US THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD FROM BEGINNING TO END. Jesus Christ is to us the highest of all critics. He has stamped the Old Testament Scriptures as true, and declared them to be all they claim to be. If he was mistaken, as some

tell us, we elect to be mistaken with Him. The very supposition is blasphemous. Within sight of where we sit is the window of the room in which dear Spurgeon breathed his last. He has gone, but his witness against the "down grade" still lives. In all parts of the world there are faithful souls that sigh and cry as he did, because of the apostacy of the age. Pray God that they may be multiplied, and that England may once again honor the Bible, that has been the secret of her prosperity in the years that are past. We have thus frankly let you know just where we stand, and what we seek to preach and teach by our own voice, and the voices of the missionaries. They go from house to house with what we believe to be *the infallible Word of God* in their hands. If this witness and testimony be yours also, we make bold to ask your help."

Yours respectfully,

THOS. McDOUGALL.

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